RNA FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

RIVERVIEW Neighborhood Association

October 1986 232 Ogden Avenue – Jersey City, N.J. 07307 – (201) 798-0493

RNA IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, ORGANIZATION OR ELECTED OFFICIAL.

Fire Alarm "Cools" Hot Debate

In the midst of a heated debate, concerning several projects of interest to the Planning and Development Committee, the fire alarm sounded, abruptly, ending the September meeting of the Riverview Neighborhood Association. As you know, our meetings are always held in the Harborview Health Care Center, and while they are always stimulating and informative, none has ever been quite as well attended and interesting as this last meeting was. We had barely covered the information gathered by the Planning and Development Committee ie. the construction at 206-208 Ogden and a planned project for Griffith and Palisade, when some members raised the question of the Association's and in particular the Planning and Development Committees priorities concerning the projects they choose to check on, leading to a rather zealous discussion on the part of some of the members. Suddenly the air conditioning went silent and the fire alarm began buzzing loudly. A staff member of Harborview told us it would be best to take no chances and to vacate the building. All members went directly to a staircase and out to the sidewalk. Fortunately, it was a false alarm, but it was too late to salvage the meeting. (My personal applause to everyone for their quick and careful exit.)

We never did get to talk about the current status of Mountain Road or the new RNA constitution, and we apologize to those committee members who never got a chance to speak. But there is always next month.

So, join us Tuesday, October 14th, at 7:30 p.m. at the Harborview Health Care Center for the next assembly of the Riverview Neighborhood Association. I promise you it will be an interesting evening.

–Secretary
Maria E. Tuzzo

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

On Thursday, September 19th, two members of our Committee were at City Hall for the Board of Adjustment meeting. A developer, Mr. John Sacci, was seeking to comvert the old Parkview Bar on the corner of Palisade Ave. and Griffith St. into six townhouses facing Griffith St. He needed variances to the zoning laws because his proposal had three times the number of units the law allows on that site plus buildings which would have no setback from the property line. Mr. Sacci was basing his variance request on the idea that he was ony remodeling and adding on to the existing building.

The Committee had met previously with Mr. Sacci to review his drawings and decided that we could not approve of the high density (i.e., the number of units) he was proposing for that site even though we were favorably impressed by the other things about his plans – individually owned townhouses, for instance, with a parking garage for each house.

Each "house", incidentally, would have been only 16 feet wide and 25 feet long, an unusually small site for a private house. This small house size was quickly noted and commented on by the board. The Committee recommended a compromise number of units of either three or four, and the Board suggested the number four. We also testified that we didn't think much of the original structure would be re–usable for this project and therefore not a good basis for granting a variance.

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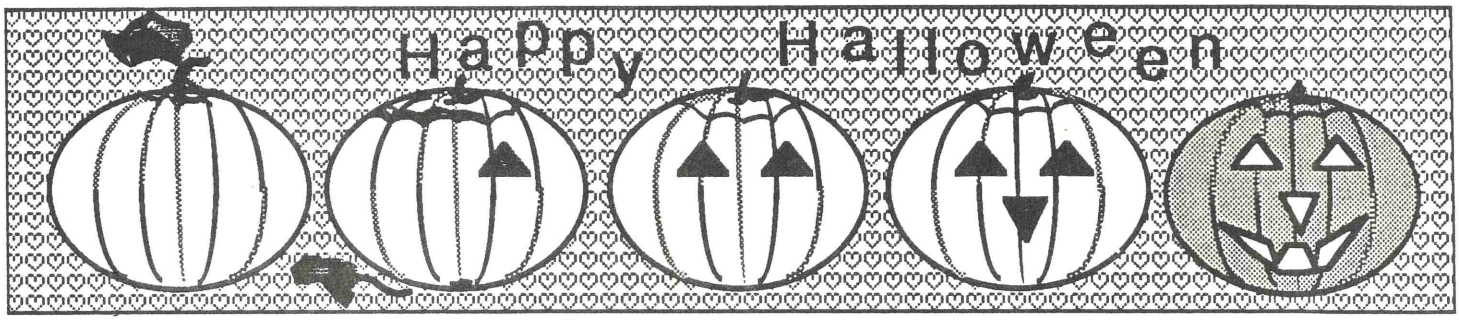

Illustration: Raquel Sweeny

PLANNING (Cont'd from page 1)

The Board of Adjustment voted heavily against the project (5 to 2) and so it is finished for now.

We approached Mr. Sacci after the meeting to talk about the compromise, but he seemed angry and said that he was abandoning the project. Councilman Tom Hart also accused us of being responsible for keeping that corner a hangout for undesirables. (Mr. Hart had spoken in favor of the proposal).

The Committee will keep RNA posted on this site. We should remember that the developer of the property at 206-208 Ogden Ave. also testified before the Board that he would have to build 12 units on that site or nothintg, and now we see he has found it possible to build "to code".

On August 27th, our Committee was invited to view a model of a proposed residential building development at 100 Paterson Plank road in Jersey City. Our meeting was in the offices of Jos. Vitullo, an architect, and included the project's developers Robert Tatem and James Feter, Commander.

The site of the proposed development is a long, narrow strip of land between Paterson Plank Road and the base of the Palisades, just about at the point where the Road crosses the railroad tracks into Hoboken (at Hope St.). The property extends up the Road for several hundred feet and is now occupied by a three-story red brick industrial building (the old Coven building).

The developer's proposal is to build approximately 23 residential "cluster-type" buildings to house 220 condo units and to include 5 elevator towers. These buildings would be eight stories tall and built on top of the existing industrial structures, which would provide 300 parking spaces. The new structures would supposedly be about as high as the cliffs in back of it, but the Committee suspects that they would actually be much higher.

Needless to say, we are very alarmed by the proposal. It would, in effect, create a screen of apartment buildings right in front of and up against the Palisades. This would work directly against the recommendations of the Regional Plan Association to preserve the Palisades as a green open space.

At present, we are getting in touch with state and local environmental groups and state legislators to express our concern and solicit support against this project.

Randy Sanford

THE JEWISH NEW YEAR by R.S. Gerber

Urban renewal has brought with it an influx of new-comers to our neighborhood. Our neighborhood association has become the central social and cultural organization of this diverse group of people. The feeling of unity that our concerned efforts has fostered has also promoted a curiosity about the differences that exist among us. It is to satisfy this curiosity that I will attempt to write about the Jewish New Year here and in Israel.

First of all, I would like the reader to picture a nation with a majority culture which is Jewish; what I mean by that is, when thinking about the majority culture of the United States, it is understood that the determining culture here is Protestant. Within that framework, everyone is allowed their fundamental right to practice their own religion, but our schools, our national holidays, our national approach to problems is decidedly Protestant. Israel, as a predominantly Jewish nation, celebrates its national holidays accordingly. In America, everyone celebrates their faith, or lack of it, with a suitable group, if one can be found. And so it is in Israel. The variety of ways people express their faith, or lack of it, is as numerous as the ways people behave here or in any other country, and probably in similar proportion. So many countries have renewed their interest in traditional values, that the rise in religious observance is not an isolated instance. More people are seeking and returning to time bested ways. But, because Israel plays such a significant part as the Holy Land, people assume that percentage-wise, there are more traditionally observant people in Israel. Maybe there are. One thing for certain, the majority of the Israeli population celebrate the Jewish holidays to some degree, some more traditionally than others. Almost everyone, religious or not, buys new clothes, new shoes and gifts for the New Year. The gifts are for neighbors, friends and family. Everyone is included. Not everyone goes to Synagogue or even follows proscribed observances. Some people take their holiday by traveling and relaxing outside the country or in another section of the State. Traveling is a favorite holiday activity. Different spots are suitable for different seasons and of course, different tastes. In such a small country, it is possible to find an ideal vacation spot - from the mountains next to the sea in the north, to the oases of the southern deserts, to the excitement of the larger cities, Tel Aviv or Jerusalem.

With all this diversity, you may well begin to wonder how does the Jewish Israeli population link up with or resemble the Jewish population in the United States? To answer this question is to

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JEWISH NEW YEAR Cont'd.

touch upon a central "problem" for the Jewish people. Since the Jewish population is a minority culture here, the only way for those who wish to maintain an active link and identity with their faith and culture is to go to a central place where others who desire to do so are congregated. An American man or woman wishing to cling to their faith, cannot be as lax about their observance as one in Israel, where if you don't go to Synagogue, you are still surrounded by people celebrating the same holiday.

Homogenous cultures, or even neighborhoods, can rely upon shared values to communicate and survive as a group. Mixed cultures, or groups, must seek other grounds than religion for points of common concern and interest. Maybe it is the essence of religion that all parties in a mixed group look for as a basis for gathering together. Maybe it's just good sense for neighbors to join in communion, being cognizant and appreciative of our differences, but striving for something beyond those divisions for mutual protection, support and survival. In any case, whatever the reason is for gathering together in groups, the experiences shared are a bond that unites all those who participate.

UNDER the chair

1) Status report on the body shop at 33 Griffith Street: RNA has notified the Building Department, the Zoning Board, the Fire Department, and local and state Health Departments to look into the zoning and health concerns of the neighborhood. As we went to print, there have been no apparent attempts to correct the problems of indequate water facilities or lack of a proper spray booth in the body shop. Traffic and cars on the sidewalk continue to congest Griffith Street. There was no response from the owner to RNA's telephone inquiries.

2) Status report on 206-208 Ogden Ave. properties: Construction of two two-family houses with off-street parking has begun. The plans for these structures indicate that they will be built exactly to R-2 zoning code. John Mastro of 212 Ogden Ave., is our unofficial construction observer of this project. RNA is inquiring about the status of the $120,000. tax bill on this property.

3) At our last meeting, tenants of two large apartment houses, 164 and 274 Ogden Avenue, informed RNA of

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Opinion —— *Letters to the Editor*

The comments expressed in this column reflect the opinion of the writer and not necessarily that of the RNA.

MAIL BOX IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

I would like to know what happened to the idea of placing a mail box on Ogden Avenue.

I think it would be a great help to all of us residents who sometimes find it hard to have a letter picked up by the mailmain. I think it would be a good idea to place it on the corner of Ogden Ave. and Franklin St., by the Nursing Home, since that facility usually has guards and visitors coming in and out at all times.

I have heard comments that vandals might destroy it the same way they destroyed others in the neighborhood. But, are we going to give in to the vandals? Isn't it incredible to hear that because of the rotten behavior of certain elements, we are deprived of something we have the right to? Are we the ones to be punished?

I would like to ask the RNA to contact the right persons so we can have our mailbox.

Raquel Sweeny

THANKS, RNA

Several years ago, some of the neighbors and myself decided to form a block association. We felt our once beautiful park was badly in need of repairs and our streets made safer. We held our meetings in the back room of the Park View Tavern. Much to my dismay, the group dispersed after three meetings. Then, came the beautiful young people who settled in our neighborhood and they formed a block association; and might I add, made it a great success. Many thanks to all members involved. I am also proud to be a member.

Josephine Allegretto

THE SNAP SHOT SHOW

By R.S. Gerber

In the early evening on a warm September night, people were gathering at Solo Studios, on Palisade Ave., to see and share the moments of their lives captured and preserved on film. Many, who came with family, friends and neighbors, dressed up for the occasion, which may indicate the amount of excitement, generated by this show. Also judging by the turnout, it would seem that the motivating concepts behind the show touched people.

Snap shots are a highly personal, popular art form that people value, appreciate and enjoy sharing. For all the differences in technical proficiency, the photographers all succeeded in communicating their personal vision in a broader, more universal way, making the show a success from its conception to the actual event.

their fears that their buildings were going to be converted into condominiums. Both buildings have a number of vacant apartments that weren't being rented. A meeting was set-up with our Councilman George Aviles of Ward C, who informed the tenants of their rights in this matter.

4) RNA has received a letter from Rick Cohen, Director of the Department of Housing and Economic Development, in which he states his support of our efforts to create a park at the corner of Ogden Ave. and Cuneo Place. He is also looking into the matter of the illegal sale of Tumulty Park.

5) Last month RNA started a process to get the deadend section of Griffith Street and Ogden Ave. on the books so that it will be cleaned by a street-sweeper on a weekly basis. Letters were sent to the Incinerator Authority, Traffic Engineering and Councilman Tom Hart informing them of the need to clean this street that borders the south end of Riverview Park.

6) Heights Neighborhood Housing Services is sponoring a special HEAT Loan Program which will provide low cost loans for new heating boilers, hot water heaters, or improvements to reduce fuel consumption. The maximum loan amount is $3,500., the interest rate will be 5%, and the term will be nine years. Please call NHS at 420-1843 for more information.

7)Health Services is a non-profit health and education agency which offers comprehensive reproductive health services to all men and women regardless of age, marital status, or ability to pay. Some of their programs include family planning, maternity and infant care, pregnancy testing, support groups and health education. For more information, please call 451-6300.

8) Suggestions:
   a) To have another Fall Harvest Party for the residents of the River View Health Care Facility;
   b) To start a food drive for the needy in our City for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. RNA needs volunteers for these two projects.

9) Announcement: Support the Waverly Street Block Association and fight a proposed nine-story hi-rise condominium development at Central Ave. and Waverly Street. Come to the October 16th Board of Adjustment meeting at 7:00 PM in City Hall. Speak out against unnecessary development!

10) The End: Councilman Tom Hart became a card carrying Republican on September 17th. One of the reasons for this defection was certain Democratic Party policies that offended him. Among them, he said, "it offended me that communism was going on around the world". Is he implying that the communists are making inroads in Hudson County? Mr. Hart, please clarify.

HEIGHTS PRIDE WEEK SCHEDULE

1) Saturday, October 11, 10:30 AM – Pershing Field: "5KM Pride Race"; at 1:00 PM: "Youth Day", a series of games and contests for young people; a Swim Meet.

2) Monday, October 13, 7:30 PM, P.S. No. 8: "A Night of Entertainment" featuring the cultural talents of our residents.

3) Wednesday, October 15, 7:30 PM, Community Center, Pershing Field: "Awards Night" highlighting the achievements and accomplishments of our citizenry; "Citizen of the Year" award.

4) Friday, October 17, 7:00 PM, P.S. No. 8: The annual "Spelling Bee".

5) Saturday, October 18, 2:00 PM, P.S. No. 25: "Battle of the Bands" musical competition; at 8:00 PM. "Rock Around the Heights" Dance.

6) Sunday, October 19, 12:00 Noon, Pershing Field: "Festival In the Park" with an ethnic theme featuring the culture, arts, crafts and foods of the various nationalities that live in the Heights.

For further information, please contact: Marie Murray at 547-4576 or June Payne at 798-1844.

COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARD

On October 26, 28, 29, 30 and November 1st, the St. Paul of the Cross theatre group will present the musical Carousel. The performances of Oct. 29th and Nov. 1st will be at 2.00 p.m. and the tickets for these dates are $5.00. The Oct. 28, 29 and 30th performances will be at 6:30 p.m. for dinner and the show will start at 7:30 p.m. Tickets for these three evening programs will be $12.00., I can tell you that you will be very well entertained. It is a worthwhile enterprise to support and a chance to see your neighbors display their talents.

So once again, tickets for the afternoon shows are $5.00, and the tickets for the evening shows are $12.00, and that includes dinner. Hope to see you there.

--Maria E. Tuzzo

AIDS IN JERSEY CITY

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta lists Jersey City as the city having the third highest reported cases of AIDS in the nation. New York is first; San Francisco is second; and Miami was third until recently, when Jersey City (which was fourth) changes places with Miami. What is unique about the Jersey City cases is that, unlike New York and San Francisco where most of the cases are in the homosexual/bisexual male high risk group, our cases are predominantly among intravenous drug users.

There is a lot of fear and hysteria associated with AIDS. We can reduce that with good information about this disease and how it spreads from person to person.

WHAT IS AIDS? AIDS, or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, is an illness which impairs and destroys the body's ability to fight off diseases. A person who has AIDS is susceptible to both common and rare infections because the body cannot fight them off or recover easily from them. Because these infections take the opportunity of the immune system's breakdown to infect the person, we call them "opportunistic infections". Some of the infections are common ones that we all may get from time to time, like common pneumonias; others are rare illnesses which had not been seen in people previously, except those whose immune systems were impaired by chemotherapy and radiation (cancer patients) or hemodialysis (kidney disease). Most of the people who get AIDS are young. Of the 9 people with AIDS I have worked with, 8 were under 30 years old.

WHAT CAUSES AIDS? AIDS is caused by a virus which has several names: LAV (Lymphadenopathy-Associated Virus). HTLV-III (Human T-Cell Lymphatrophic Virus Number III); and the current name, HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). This virus appears to be relatively new in humans. The earliest documented case of AIDS was in 1978. The virus is thought to come from Africa where AIDS is epidemic. This virus is a weak virus. It cannot live very long outside the body. It can be killed by extremes of temperature, by loss of its home (blood) or by a solution of household bleach (Clorox) and water. It is much weaker than the hepatitis B virus. AIDS IS HARD TO GET!

HOW IS THE VIRUS TRANSMITTED? The HIV Virus is spread in only two ways: through blood to blood contact or semen to blood contact (semen contains white blood cells). People get AIDS through the sharing of contaminated needles or through the deposit of virus-infected semen into the body as in the sex act. The most effective means of sexual transmission is through unprotected anal intercourse, which is why homosexual and bisexual men are at high risk. However, AIDS can be transmitted during regular heterosexual intercourse between man and woman as well.

Previous to April 1985, people also contracted AIDS through blood transfusions with infected blood. In April 1985, all blood supplies were tested and cleaned out. It is now considered safe to have a blood transfusion. You cannot get AIDS by giving blood donations. The needles are used once, then disposed of.

The other way AIDS is transmitted is from parent to unborn child. If the father carries the virus and transmits it to the mother during intercourse, and the mother gets pregnant, chances are that the baby will get AIDS. Mothers and their unborn babies share blood. Babies who get AIDS have very little chance of surviving.

HOW SOON AFTER GETTING INFECTED WILL A PERSON GET AIDS? The latency period for this virus may be up to 11 years. This means you could get infected with the virus and not show symptoms until 11 years later. However, once the virus is in your body, you can pass it on to others—i.e., you are a carrier.

WHO GETS AIDS? Although the CDC has listed "High Risk Groups" be aware that AIDS is gotten through behaviours—addicts sharing infected needles and having sex in which semen is deposited in another's body and in which the semen is infected with the virus. There is no way to know if your sex partner is infected or not. All sexually active people who have multiple partners or whose partners have multiple partners are at risk for AIDS.

The high risk groups are: Homosexual and Bisexual men; Intravenous Drug Users; Hemophiliacs; Haitians; the sex partners of all of the above, the unborn children of all of the above.

We do not know why Haitians are a high risk group. They have a disproportionately high number of cases and are being studied by the CDC.

We do know that AIDS is moving from the high risk groups into the general population, most likely through the I.V. drug user who may have sex with non-drug users who do not realize they are at risk from this behavior.

HOW SERIOUS IS AIDS? To date, less than a quarter of the people with AIDS have survived more than 3 years after diagnosis. AIDS is considered to be fatal in 100% of the cases, given time. A less serious form of the disease, AIDS-Related Complex (ARC), which leads to AIDS in up to 25% of the cases, appears to have a lower death rate, however, people with ARC who survive will be sick and immune compromised for the rest of their lives unless a cure is found.

CAN AIDS BE CURED? IS THERE A PREVENTIVE VACCINE? The answer to both at this time is NO. While scientists are working on both, a cure and vaccine, we do not believe there will be a cure for a long time and scientists estimate that a vaccine is at least 10 years away. New experimental drugs are being tested, e.g., AZT, however, none of the drugs have done more than improve the condition and lengthen the life span of the person with AIDS. So far, there has been no drug which stops AIDS and repairs the immune system.

HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF FROM GETTING AIDS? It has been shown that the AIDS virus cannot pass through a latex condom. The best way for sexually active people to protect themselves is to always use a condom when having sex—whether it be anal sex, vaginal sex, or

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AIDS . . . Cont'd

oral sex. Because the homosexual/bisexual community is doing this, the rate of growth of AIDS among this risk group is slower. If you are thinking of having sex with someone whose entire sexual and drug history for the past 11 years is unknown to you—and this is probably true of anyone you meet—use condoms, and use them correctly. People who use needles to inject drugs can protect themselves by stopping the drug use (there are treatment programs available), or by changing the route of administration of the drug (e.g., snorting the drug rather than shooting it), or by cleaning the injection paraphernalia (needles, syringes, cookers, cottons, etc.) using one of three accepted methods: 1) boiling the paraphernalia in water for 15 minutes; 2) washing it thoroughly; 3) washing the "works" in a solution of one part household bleach (Clorox) to ten parts water and rinsing thoroughly. After cleaning the needles, etc. never share them with anybody else. Women of child-bearing age who are in a high risk group or whose spouse is in a high risk group should postpone pregnancy until more is known.

DO I HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT SENDING MY CHILD TO SCHOOL, USING PUBLIC BATHROOMS, EATING IN RESTAURANTS, ETC.? NO! AIDS cannot be transmitted through casual contact. To get AIDS you must have sex with an infected person or share a needle with an infected person. AIDS IS HARD TO GET! There have been no cases of transmission of the AIDS virus through any other means but sex and sharing needles, except for blood transfusions before April '85 and mother to unborn baby. A recent study published by the New England Journal of Medicine in which over 600 families in which one person had AIDS were studied, none of the other family members contracted the virus. Many of the people with AIDS in the study were children who bit each other, fought with each other, slept in the same bed, and did all the things kids do, and none of them transmitted the virus to their sisters, brothers, parents, etc. Some of the adults in the study did things they were told not to do—e.g., shared toothbrushes, razors (both of which can carry infected blood)—yet none of them infected anyone else in the household. No health care workers caring for AIDS patients have gotten AIDS from their work. You cannot get AIDS from food in a restaurant, even if a person with AIDS bleeds into the food. You cannot get AIDS from a toilet, stairway railing, from breath, from tears, sweat or saliva. (Note - The virus has been found in tears, sweat and saliva, but in such small amounts it does not cause AIDS. You would have to drink a bucket of tears or saliva to possibly get enough virus to contract the disease. No one has gotten AIDS this way.) Despite what the supermarket rag newspapers say, insects do not transmit AIDS. You cannot get AIDS from touching a person with AIDS. You do not have to worry about sending your child to school. What you do have to worry about is who you have sex with, and how; who your children have sex with and how; and the use of needles to inject drugs. Now is the time to start talking to your pre-teenaged children about AIDS and how people get it. Educate them: Their lives may depend on it.

WHERE CAN I GET HELP OR MORE INFORMATION? Christ Hospital in Jersey City has a program of support groups, homecare help and services for people with AIDS and ARC. There are several N.J. Hotlines for information:

Central N.J. Gay & Lesbian Switchboard - (609) 466-1980
Gay Activist Alliance of N.J. Hotline (201) 343-6402
N.J. Lesbian & Gay Coalition (201) 596-0767

WHAT'S THE FUTURE OF AIDS? A year ago at this time, there were 10,000 cases of AIDS in the U.S. Today, there are 23,000. The numbers are doubling every year. We estimate that there are 23,000 cases now (these are reported cases, there are probably many more unreported cases); 230,000 cases of ARC; and about 2½ million people carrying the virus who are not showing symptoms. In N.J. there have been 1,503 cases reported statewide since 1981 when they began keeping count. Since Jan. 1, there have been 94 cases reported in Hudson County. Many cases go unreported.

Remember, AIDS IS HARD TO GET, but there are certain behaviors that will trasmit it, and you can PREVENT it by changing those behaviors.

People who have questions about AIDS may write to me, c/o RNA and I will answer them. If RNA members would like a presentation on AIDS at their meeting, tell the Chairman and we will provide it.

Edith Springer

Edith Springer is a member of RNA. She is a social worker who has spent the past 4 years working with people with AIDS in two N.Y.C. hospitals. She is currently a training specialist for Narcotic and Drug Research, Inc., training health care professionals about AIDS. She is the co-chairperson of the Women's Aids Project of the Gay Men's Health Crisis in N.Y.C. and a member of the Board of Directors of the Association for Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment, an AIDS service organization in N.Y.C.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

CHEESE CAKE — by Josephine Allegretto

Mix in order:

2	Cups Presto Cake Flour
1 ½	Cups sugar
4	Eggs
8	Oz. Cream Cheese
1/2	Lb. Sweet butter
1/2	Cup chopped walnuts (optional)

Grease and flour tube pan and bake at 350° for 1 hour.

The Photographs of *Thomas Brauer* at the Snap Shot Show

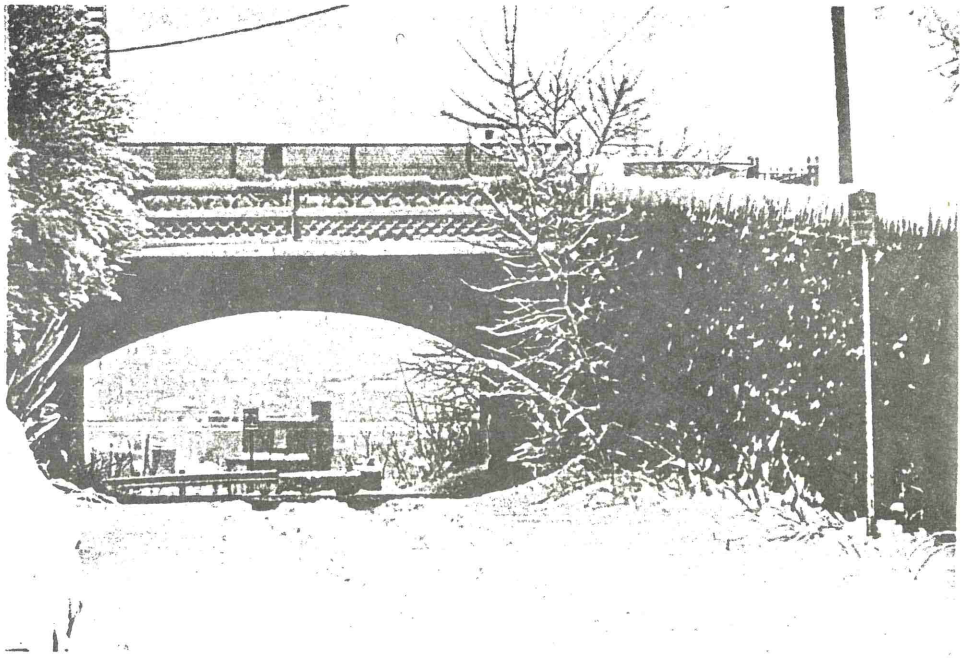
RIVERVIEW PARK IN PICTURES

As far back as I can remember, Photography has had a special place in my life. The world is full of millions upon millions of pictures, all waiting to be frozen by the camera, affixed to film forever. The camera has become an extention of my eye.

This year, my efforts have proven fruitful. In May, I was awarded three honorable mentions for the "Capture an Empire" Photo Contest sponsored by the Empire State Building corporation. My photographs will be on permanent display in the newly founded Empire State Photo Galery.

In August, out of some twenty thousand photographs from around the world, I was chosen as a finalist in a photo contest sponsored by Photographer's Forum Magazine. My photo will be published in the Autumn in "The Best of Photographer's Forum".

Thomas Brauer
368 Ogden Ave.
853-3972



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